

HAWAII'S LIVING REEF PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The US Coral Reef Task Force adopted a Resolution at their meeting in Puerto Rico in October 2002, which requested the seven States and Territories to work with their federal partners to develop local action strategies to address six primary threats to coral reefs. Hawaii has finalized its local action strategy for lack of public awareness and is moving into the second phase to develop all the components of the program needed to launch the outreach campaign.

About 2 years ago the Department of Land and Natural Resources (DLNR), Division of Aquatic Resources (DAR) was asked to join a group of agency and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the design of a survey to assess Public Attitudes Towards Conservation. A market research study was commissioned and funded by the Nature Conservancy (TNC) and Malama Hawaii with input for survey questions gathered from several key organizations. Research among statewide residents revealed several key findings about general public's attitudes towards conservation and the factors that motivate a person to 'get involved'.

One of the notable findings was that a decline in reef resources was recognized by a majority of those surveyed as an environmental issue. There are several factors influencing this recognition, but the results indicated that this was one area to focus attention for the development of an outreach program.

After the market research study was completed, DAR hosted a second set of meetings in all 4 counties, over a period of 4 months. Attendees included key marine resource educators, ocean recreation operators, federal partners and NGO representatives to ask more focused questions about what should be included in an outreach campaign. Participants were all active in existing coral reef awareness, protection and enhancement programs. The questions asked included: 1) What is working now? What isn't? 2) Who are the key stakeholders? 3) What are the key messages? And 4) Brainstorming on effective delivery vehicles? Over 50 individuals representing nearly as many organizations attended these meetings to provide input. Findings from this meeting and





the market research study were provided to a public relations firm contracted by DAR to develop the outreach plan, logo, slogan and key messages and target groups to focus the outreach campaign.

Key individuals from each island who attended the second round of meetings were invited to attend a branding workshop and provide input and achieve buy-in to the components of the outreach plan. At this workshop the group obtained input for the development of logo and slogan; honed messages; refined the goals, objectives of the outreach strategy; and defined target audiences. The results or this are listed below:

Outreach Program Goals:

- Build and increase general public awareness of the importance of the coral reef ecosystem to Hawaii's lifestyle
- Teach and encourage positive behaviors
- The outreach program needs to be a collaborative effort among all agencies and organizations involved currently in coral reef outreach

Initial Audiences

- Residents
- Visitors
- Businesses
- Policy makers and
- Ocean activities enthusiasts

Messages

- Island lifestyle is dependent on the coral reef ecosystem
- The islands and reefs are connected- care for these since what we do on land has affects on our coral reefs
- Resources are available to learn more about the reefs and the importance to island lifestyles
- Individuals can take action
- Importance of the coral reefs in Native Hawaiian culture and their concept of stewardship
- The reef is alive!

At the branding workshop, all organizations present agreed to work collaboratively and to also generate a broad spectrum of support before going public with the outreach campaign. Participants formed a Coral Reef Outreach Network, which facilitates communication and serves as a collaborative decision making body. The Coral Reef Outreach Network (CRON) agreed to work together to develop all materials and events that would be needed to launch the campaign. In addition, participants agreed that the





outreach messages should be positive and life enhancing. Notably the CRON agreed that the role of this outreach strategy is to enhance and coordinate existing efforts, encourage new ones, and seek increased voluntary participation among the general public to 'take action'.

An outreach plan developed by the PR firm was presented to the CRON at a subsequent meeting and all components were approved by the group including the logo, slogan and overall strategy being proposed. The group supported the slogan "A Living Reef Gives Our Islands Life" and provided input into the design of a unifying logo. The overall outreach strategy is called the Living Reef Program.

One of the key components of the strategy is to develop a media package with TV and radio public service announcements and print media spot ads all designed with integrated messages and visuals. In addition, ongoing media relations components would include press releases (local, national and international), "experts" quoted and referenced in the media, opinion articles under the by-lines of appropriate experts, monthly e-mail blast to stakeholders, and articles by each of the key federal and state agencies that focus on what they do to protect and manage coral reef resources.

COMMUNITY/MEDIA RELATIONS PLAN

STEPS

Gaining Community/Stakeholder Support

Since final approval of a logo, tagline and integrated communications plan for Hawaii's Living Reef program, the first step was gaining buy-in from "stakeholders." On the activist side, this includes existing coral reef awareness, protection and enhancement programs, roughly the groups and individuals who have been part of the preparation of the campaign.

On the "target" side, this includes visitor industry organizations (such as the Hawaii Hotel Association), fishing industry organizations (such as commercial and recreational fishing organizations and clubs, aquarium fisheries, fishing store owners, fishing news publishers, well-known fishermen and watermen such as Mike Sakamoto and Nainoa Thompson, etc.), ocean recreation enthusiasts (dive associations, snorkeling shops, canoe clubs, etc.), cruise operators (Norwegian Cruise Lines, dinner and diving cruise operators, snorkeling and whale watching cruises, etc.), and educators (particularly representatives of the Department of Education, private schools and pre-school care).

The goal has been to generate a <u>broad spectrum of support before going public</u> so that when the program is launched it will already have major buy-in from a cross-section of





organizations. At the initial press conference or launch event, the goal is to have an array of community representatives prepared to stand up and say: "We back this effort."

To achieve this broad-based array of support, the messages should be positive and life enhancing — in short, inclusive rather than exclusive. The emphasis will be on the future rather than the past.

While the DLNR DAR is seen as the convener, coordinator and "honest broker" in this effort, it should not be seen as a government program. Rather it is seen as a marshalling of grassroots and businesses programs to address an often ignored concern. DLNR DAR's role, is not to tell people what to do, give orders, restrict or punish. The role is to enhance and coordinate existing efforts, encourage new ones, seek increased voluntary participation on any level and help publicize both the efforts and the results. DLNR DAR is in a position of wanting results, not credit.

To achieve this level of community support, it is essential to coordinate our efforts among the "stakeholder" groups. A combination of one-on-one meetings and group meetings has taken during the summer of 2003 and is necessary to explain and get buy-in for Hawaii's Living Reef program.

COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

(1) The Launch

On the island of Oahu we will announce a press conference/launch event. Present at the event will be representatives of the key partners that have been recruited. The Governor of Hawaii, Linda Lingle will assist with the launch. The neighbor islands of Hawaii, Maui, and Kauai will have simultaneous launches if possible that coincide with a local ocean related event or activity.

Key points:

- Our island lifestyle depends on the coral reef ecosystem.
- This is a campaign, similar to the Alien Species effort or Mothers Against Drunk Driving, which aims to bring together the efforts of many diverse players with an interest in protecting the reef.
- DLNR DAR, or some other agency, is a coordinator, clearinghouse and supporter of the efforts.
- The logo and tagline (announced for the first time) are intended to act as a reminder, much like the recycling logo, to protect the reef to preserve our island lifestyle. (We do not expect groups to use this logo each time they publish or publicize something. When the materials are intended for the general public or any of our specific targeted groups and contain information about how to protect/nurture/care for the reef ecosystem, we hope the logo is used so that we





build a general public awareness of the logo's meaning.) All groups involved in the campaign may insert additional information on their specific programs in the press kits.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1. Building (or enhancing existing web-based information) a website that acts as a resource clearinghouse so that people can get information and/or find an outlet for their concern or volunteer opportunity by being directed to the appropriate organization. The site would link to all agencies/organizations who are willing to participate.
- 2. Creating an award(s), which will honor those who do the most to encourage proper use of the reef to insure its survival.
- 3. Issuing periodic news releases and other efforts to remind the community of reef/fish health, specific events and activities and generally what is being done.
- 4. Coordinating meetings of the partners to guarantee continuing generation of clearinghouse information and most effective use of resources.
- 5. Creating, in cooperation with the DOE, NWHI Coral Reef Ecosystem Reserve and others, activities and programs for children that could be used by schools and on television (we would look for corporate/business/grant sponsorship).
- **6.** In cooperation with the appropriate commercial and recreational fishing organizations and outfitters, increase awareness and adherence to the fishing ethic.

(2) Ongoing Media Relations

Solicit the cooperation of television station(s) to air regular information on the coral reef ecosystem during the weather portion. We envision a "what is going on at the reef today or this week" type fact.

Solicit the cooperation of the print (weather page) and radio media (weather forecast) to print or air the same facts on a regular schedule.

Bi-monthly press releases (local, national and international) promoting aspects of coral reef ecosystem awareness. These will include "stories" that may be pitched exclusively to selected media or made available generally to the media.

Monthly newsletter, fax and/or e-mail blast to stakeholders updating them on activities and events and encouraging them to make their own activities and events known through Hawaii's Living Reef program. Another goal is to encourage them to use the logo, tagline etc. on their own collateral and other materials going forward (see note above).

Update the website as appropriate with news, events, etc.





Establish and maintain a list of "experts" on coral reef awareness and strive to have them quoted and referenced in the media.

Prepare opinion articles under the by-lines of appropriate experts and stakeholders to be placed in the daily newspapers, Pacific Business News, magazines, visitor publications, ethnic community newspapers or parish newsletters, as appropriate.

Seek appearances on television morning and news program and radio talk and news programs for experts and stakeholders to discuss aspects of the campaign, news about the reefs, etc.

Target appropriate visitor media, in-flight magazines, drive guides, Japanese publications, in-room video, etc. with visitor friendly information about the campaign (what is the logo you see everywhere) and the effort to protect the reef.

(3) PSA And Paid Media Efforts

Prepare print and broadcast advertising to be used as Public Service Announcements or as paid advertising should the budget be available.

Our goal is have a set of PSAs available within a few months of the launch time, replaced by a second set six to nine months into the campaign.

Seek a corporate sponsor or sponsors who would pay to place (and perhaps even produce) these advertisements for credit, and also seek foundation or other financial support to place these advertisements.

Endeavor to gain donated media space.

(4) Website

Launch a website at the time of the press launch www.hawaiireef.org where visitors to the site can easily find information about Hawaii's reefs and related issues via links to other sites. Excellent national information is available that can make this site very useful locally.

The website address (which will match the tagline) will be displayed prominently on all collateral material, news releases, video productions, in school education materials, and the like.



In addition, encourage all Hawaii tourism sites (hawaii.com, gohawaii.com, plus media sites like honoluluadvertiser.com and starbulletin.com to prominently include the logo and site as a link or use appropriate content for their own "save the reef" page.

At a minimum, websites will be updated regularly for coordination and promotion of ongoing events and activities.

The website will have interactive education-based games or program for kids, general information for adults and more specialized information for specific industries, scientists, coral reef hobbyists, etc. The site could also highlight supporters with a "Friends of the Reef" page that honors corporate supporters and individuals.

(5) Reef Awareness Awards

Create Reef Awareness Awards and set a date certain (no more than one year out) when it will be awarded with appropriate fanfare.

Individuals and organizations that actively participate in the program should be honored with an annual award (i.e., Friend of the Reef) for the best program.

Individuals and organizations that contribute financially or in kind should be recognized with some type of award.

Individuals or organizations that go above and beyond in striving to preserve the reef for future generations could be given an annual award.

This event will be aimed to grow into the equivalent of the Sales and Marketing Executives' Salesperson of the Year award, the YWCA Women Leaders Award or the HVCB "Keep It Hawai'i" award. Sponsoring publications and TV stations will be sought.

The awards will be designed and donated by Tiffany's and Co. Pacific Regional Office. There are seven categories of awards: 5 for businesses and 2 for communities.

(6) Public Displays

To support the advertising and media campaign, the program will seeks to create interactive, informational "trade show" displays that could be used at public events, fairs, appropriate meetings, and empty storefronts. (Basically, a smaller sized traveling version of the Hanauma Bay Education Center displays would be ideal. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Although a million plus visitors a year go to Hanauma Bay, most Hawaii residents and perhaps one out of seven Hawaii visitors do NOT go there.)





A positive, life-affirming display that includes games and prizes, and would be used in public places such as Bishop Museum Family Days, the Honolulu International Airport, school fairs, at all participating organization's events and sites as needed, etc.

Tabletop displays should be created for dive, snorkeling, fishing, beach, book, etc. stores. (Offer these through shopping center management companies, commercial realty companies, etc.)

Target date for the static display should be six months from launch. For the interactive display, it will be necessary to find sponsorship support.

(7) Education for School Children

Proposed or 'in development' pieces include the following:

- Sponsorship of special awards for projects about the coral reef at annual science fairs in schools and at the statewide science fair.
- In conjunction with other programs such as Tech Quest, sponsorship of a Save the Reef website contest.
- Organizing an all-school beach/reef cleanup day in coordination with the already successful existing "Get the Drift" program.
- The development of a 5-minute video featuring Alexander Gould, the voice of "Finding Nemo" that will be used to educate children on how they can get involved. The video will be available this summer for summer fun programs
- A 5-part series of education videos on Navigating Change that is being coordinated with Hokulea and its voyage to the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands. This video series will be accompanied with curriculum materials for K-12, some that will be available by this summer.

(8) Collateral And Other Awareness Elements

The coral reef awareness program should make available simple straightforward materials and POS (point of sale) promotion materials to all these businesses such as brochures, waterproof underwater cards, posters, etc.

In-Flight Video – Create a short, in-flight video for local, national and international airlines providing service to Hawaii that provides education about the importance of the coral reef ecosystem to Hawaii and emphasizes appropriate behavior. (A 3-5-minute video is being produced, and it is hoped that we can build on this effort.)

In-Room Video – Almost every hotel room in Hawaii receives in-room cable video with visitor information. We propose to create a partnership with Network media, which





manages this video content, to create an in-room video with English, Japanese and perhaps Spanish or German audio or subtitles to take the coral reef awareness message to visitors.

Printed Pieces – A simple piece of collateral would serve to tell the story of the importance of the reef, what individuals should (and should not) to preserve it and where to find out more information. It is intended for use at hotel concierge desks, activity desks, car rental agencies, dive shops, fishing supply stores, beach rental stands, snorkel rental shops, swimsuit sales stores/departments are immediate contact points for visitors and residents heading for the ocean.

Table Tents in Rooms on Ships and in Hotel Rooms – When Norwegian Cruise Lines begins its weekly round the islands voyages on the 2,000-plus-passenger ship, the itinerary will include a two-day sail to Fanning Island and back. This would be a natural venue for a coral reef education program.

THE FUTURE

The above plan covers the first year to 18 months of the program. Beyond that there are many choices. Here are a few.

Commercial Products – Signage on the beach is inappropriate, but there are several ways to take the logo, tagline and message of the coral reef awareness campaign to the beach. The logo and slogan/tagline can be placed on beach towels, mats, the backs of beach chairs and the tops of beach umbrellas – even swim trunks and swim caps.

Cruise Ships/Tour Boats – Some cruise lines already hire naturalists to come on board, especially from the Pacific Whale Foundation during whale watching season, to provide education and entertainment to passengers. A similar Hawaii's Living Reef program, with trained naturalists, presentation and collateral material should be developed to present programs on board. Alternatively, make available coral awareness programs for shore excursions.

Leverage Award-Winners – Develop an interpretive training program that incorporates those businesses and organizations who have won awards.

Rental Cars – Rental cars present an opportunity to reach large numbers of visitors with a rear-view mirror "hang-tag." A hangtag in the shape of a mask and snorkel could carry a special message about ocean safety and coral reef protection.





Japanese Visitors – Japanese and other Asian visitors present a special challenge. A concerted campaign should involve cooperation with Asian tour wholesalers who supply visitors with a lot of their information. A public relations program directed at Asian environmental and visitor publications would also be effective.

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